

The role of male violence against women in female under-representation in (geo)sciences

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Many women face male violence, simply because they are women. Street harassment, sexual harassment at the workplace, sexual assaults and rapes in public or private spaces, domestic violence, are rampant issues. About 1 on 5 women in Europe experiences at least once in her lifetime rape or physical violence, most of the time from a partner or former partner. In average, each year in France, 120 women are killed by their partner. Women scientists are women. There is no reason to suppose that they are less victims of male violence than other women.

The different forms of violence they can encounter have effects on women, on physical, behavioral, and psychological levels. Those effects can obviously affect women in their professional life as well as in their intimate or social life:

- they might want to avoid the perpetrator of the violence they were victim of;
- their self-esteem might be crushed by the disparagement suffered from a violent partner;
- a violent partner might threaten to get even more violent if they continue their studies or their career;
- the psychological effects of a rape might leave them unable to continue their life as before.

Because of such impacts on their lives, some women can't carry on their work and career as they could have, or they might even quit them, or never finish their Master or their PhD.

The fact that gender stereotyping from an early ages leads more men than women to scientific careers is now quite acknowledge. We should also think about how much of the under-representation of women in geosciences, and sciences in general, is due to the impact of male violence on women lives.